

## [Captain Jason W. James]

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and Viewpoints by Captain Jason

W. James, [1928?].

CAPTAIN JASON W. JAMES

Came to New Mexico in 1892.

In [1893?], Appointed Manager of

[Pecos?] Valley Investment and Improvement Co.

In 1902 Presented N.M.M.I. with

First Target Rifles and Ammunition

for Target Practice.

[Created Fund?] for James Medals for

### Marksmanship at N.M.M.I.

Captain Jason W. James was born in Lexington, Missouri April 28, [1843?]. When he was a lad eight or nine years old his father went to California, where he died about 1852, leaving his widow and four sons: Thomas Charles, Jason W., William C., and John W. Each boy, though at an age when they should have been in school, was compelled to assume responsibilities and do a strong man's work on their farm. Jason, who afterwards was known throughout the State of Louisiana as Captain Jason W. James, (one of the bravest soldiers in service of the South during the Civil War) had only the education he could master during a half term every winter, until he was fifteen years old. He worked the rest of the time at what jobs he could secure at such an early age. [C18 - ???]

In the spring of 1858 he was employed by Shelby and Morton to go to Salt Lake Valley in Utah, with an ox wagon train bearing supplies for the government soldiers, sent to the scene of murderings and troubles caused by the [Mormons?]. General Shelby (afterwards of the Confederate Army) had known Jason James all of his life, and understood the integrity and dauntless spirit of the lad, whom he knew would assume his share of the work with the strongest of the 2 men employed by him for the outfit.

There were no railroads west of the Missouri River at that time and the government had established forts or garrisons in Kansas, Colorado, Nebraska, New Mexico, Arizona and other parts of the West, as a protection against Indians. Provisions and army supplies were sent out by wagon trains from the Missouri River points, which were mostly drawn by oxen taking from four to seven months to haul one load and return.

The wagon train assigned to Jason James was loaded at the outfit establishment between Leavenworth City and Fort Leavenworth. Seven months of almost unbelievable hardships passed before he returned again to his home in Missouri.

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The next spring, in 1859, in spite of the hardships, danger and suffering from frozen feet and legs he had undergone on his first trip, he started with another outfit over the old trail. Gold had been discovered late in the fall of 1858, near Pike's Peak. Gold seekers were on the trail everywhere, in wagons of every description, making the journey less desolate and dangerous. However, no matter how hazardous the journey would have been, Captain James would have taken the trail just as readily as he had begun the trip a year before.

On the 17th of April 1866 Captain James was married to Miss Mary Henderson of Carroll Parish Louisiana. Captain Joseph C. Lea, afterwards of Roswell, New Mexico, was best man and his brother Judge Frank Lea the second of honor in the wedding party. These three men, comrades during fierce battles of the Civil war, renewed old friendship days in Roswell when Captain James came to make that place his home in 1892, where he began the management of the [Pecos?] 3 Valley Improvement and Investment Company in 1893.

Besides his wife and his wife's sister, Miss Nett Henderson[,?] the three daughters of his brother, lived with Captain James in Roswell. After the death of their father W.C. James and mother [Bettie?] James, the three girls were raised and educated by Captain James. Lily (Mrs. Robert [Kellahin?] of Roswell) graduated at Martin College Pulaski, Tennessee before coming to make Roswell her home in 1894. Jennie (Mrs. Robert McClenny of Roswell) attended Martin College one year completing her course at N.M.M.I. at Roswell. Bess (who married Ben [Urton?] of Roswell) was educated at Weatherford College Texas. Her death, from pneumonia, occurred at Roswell in 1929. The James family after coming to Roswell became leaders in the Church, and club and social life of the city.

Captain James was a brave soldier, a high ranking Mason and a friend to all in need of assistance. His death occurred at his ranch near [Uvalde?], Texas on September 13, 1933. He lies beside his wife and near his friends and comrades of the Civil War, Captain Joseph and Judge Frank Lea, who are buried at South Park Cemetery near Roswell.

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In 1902 Captain James presented the New Mexico Military Institute with twenty 22 caliber target rifles and ammunition for the school's first target practice, and superintended the building of the targets. He was not satisfied that the training of cadets for wars was only marching and [manual?] of arms. Colonel Willson on having medals engraved for marksmanship had then designated as the James Medals (one of these the son of the writer treasures as one of his Institute achievements for marksmanship while a cadet in 1919 ) .

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A fund was set aside by Captain James for the continuation each year of presentation of the James Medals. by Captain James.

In an address delivered to the cadets by Captain James at one of the presentations of the medals, he said with great feeling that those who heard will never forget - "Young men, I now present to you these rifle team medals as an evidence of your splendid work and our appreciation of you. It is for you to see to it that our flag is never dragged in the dirt, never insulted with impunity, nor lowered in defeat to any of the world powers, great or small."

On another occasion, addressing the Masonic Lodge members his words in some portions seemed [prophetic?] of conditions of today: "Eternal Vigilance is the price of Liberty; I feel that this beautiful country of ours was never intended to be the world's common property to be used as a dumping ground for the refuse of European Nations. It was reserved by our All-Wise Creator, for thousands of years, as a splendid heritage of the Anglo-Saxon race and in all probability as an asylum for his favored people - the Jews."

In closing this same address he said, and very truthfully: "I inherited an interest in this beautiful country from our Revolutionary Fathers. I could in confidence look them in the face and say, " I did all that in me lay to preserve and perpetuate for future generations, unsullied and with blemish, the splendid heritage which you left me."

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What more could any man do for his Country, for his State and for his home City of Roswell, than was done by Captain Jason W. James[!?!]